



*“Thus we behold Kentucky, lately an howling wilderness,
where the hand of violence shed the blood of the innocent,
we now hear the praises and adorations of our Creator.”*

- Col. Daniel Boone

Mosaic Law in “The Dark and Bloody Ground”

It was said of Daniel Boone that he carried two books with him on his wilderness explorations and hunts: *Gulliver’s Travels* and the *Bible*. In the words of 1991 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, Russell Kirk, “In colonial America, everyone with the rudiments of schooling knew one book thoroughly: the Bible.” From the Baptist exodus known as The Traveling Church, whose 600 members made up the single largest group migration to Kentucky (first settling here in Garrard County), to the Rev. John Lythe, an Anglican minister who came to Old Fort Harrod “with a Bible in one hand and an axe in the other,” to

Jane Coomes, a Catholic from Maryland who established Kentucky’s first school in a log cabin at Fort Harrod, the settlers who followed Boone’s trail were steeped in the Bible. Mrs. Coomes taught her pioneer pupils from a primitive version of the Old English Hornbook which consisted of a clapboard paddle covered with stiff paper containing the ABCs, simple arithmetic and the Lord’s Prayer. It was the practice at the time, endorsed by no less an authority than the philosopher John Locke, that, in addition to the the “three Rs,” all children “should learn perfectly by heart The Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments.”

Sources: Daniel Boone, *The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boon, Formerly a Hunter, Containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucky*, (1784).

Russell Kirk, *The Roots of American Order*, Regnery Gateway (1991).

John Boles, *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky*, University Press of Kentucky (1995).

George Ranck, *The Traveling Church*, Press of Baptist Book Concern (1891).

John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Sect. 157 (1692).

Illustration: Caleb Bingham, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through Cumberland Gap*, (Oil on canvas, 1851).